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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of a secondary education collaborative model leading to the redesign of the secondary education preservice teacher preparation program at one university. To initiate the collaboration, an invitational conference was held which included representatives of all stakeholders in secondary teacher preparation (school and university teachers and administrators). The resulting Secondary Education Collaborative included 45 people from the conference. The organizational structure included a nine-member proposal planning committee which proposed a four-phase, field-based program (self-directed experiences with adolescents; understanding teaching and schools in modern society; developing skills to meet the needs of society and students; and developing and demonstrating skills to organize content and technology for use in classrooms). Groups of school and college faculty developed curriculum modules to address six areas determined most problematic for beginning teachers (e.g., motivation, instructional strategies, and teaching ethics). The program was evaluated throughout its developmental phases and during implementation. Results affirm the effectiveness of the framework, the content, the coursework, and collaboration. The partnership resulted in a program that teaches students to become reflective practitioners and make decisions about instruction based on research and best practice. (Contains 21 references.) (SM)

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TEACHER EDUCATION OWNERSHIP AS AN ALL UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY: MAKING IT HAPPEN AT A RESEARCH I UNIVERSITY

presented by

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Introduction

A study comparing entry-level elementary and secondary education majors revealed important differences in prior teaching experiences, academic backgrounds, career plans, and professional expectations (Book & Freeman, 1986). Secondary candidates were found to have less interaction with school-aged children or to participate in teaching activities involving groups of children. In addition, they were also less likely to believe that professional education courses were important for teaching. One recommendation was that secondary teacher education programs provide early field experiences. To create effective field-based programs, the need for collaboration between higher education and public schools is recognized (Darling-Hammond et. al., 1995). However, building successful university/school partnerships on the secondary level is a more difficult task than on the elementary level, since the professional identity and career-long professional development of secondary teachers are centered on subject matter and the organizational structure of most American secondary schools is in the form of academic departments (Grossman and Stodolsky, 1995). Given these exigencies, how does a university build a collaborative relationship with schools such that a commitment is made from the view that teacher education ownership resides exclusively in neither a school district nor in a university but is a shared responsibility?

In 1988, Hawley, Austin and Goldman found that mandated changes in teacher education in 15 southern states were initiated by state legislators or state boards of education. Such top-down changes have occurred in spite of calls for collaboration in improving educational excellence (Maeroff, 1983; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Joyce and Clift, 1984; Holmes, 1986; Carnegie, 1986). More recent calls for collaboration are seen in the increasing number of professional organizations that include standards mandating partnerships in teacher

education programs (NCATE, 1995) or in surveys that encourage state policies calling for greater collaboration among various agencies (Yff, AACTE, 1996). When school/university collaboration does take place, such partnerships are usually based on the premise that the school and the university will be equal partners, will work together, and will benefit mutually (Sirotnik & Goodlad, 1988). Collaborative teacher education programs are most commonly implemented within professional development schools and based on the idea of true reciprocity (Holmes Group, 1990).

Establishing a Secondary Education Collaborative

Clift and Say (1988) define collaboration "as the joint efforts of university faculty members and public school personnel to design and provide for opportunities to improve teaching and teacher education" (p. 2). It is this definition that became the foundation for the development of a secondary education collaborative model leading to the redesign of the secondary education preservice teacher preparation program at a Research I university. To initiate such collaboration, an invitational conference sponsored by the secondary education faculty was held in March of 1993 in the board room of a local independent school district. Great care was taken to ensure representation of all stakeholders in secondary teacher preparation. Invited members included representation from each of the content disciplines offering teaching fields in the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science, the College of Geoscience, and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences; representatives associated with teacher education from throughout the College of Education; practicing teachers from middle and senior schools from each of the teaching fields and representing various areas school districts; and principals, assistant principals, and central office personnel representing various school districts. It was out of this invitational conference that the Secondary Education Collaborative was established and was composed of the 45 members attending the invitational conference. Its first general meeting was held in September of 1993.

Organizational Structure of the Secondary Education Collaborative

The organizational structure for redesigning the program evolved from the discussions of the Collaborative at each of its general meetings. This structure included a nine member proposal planning committee with invited consultants; the committee proposed a four-phase field-based program. Phase development teams composed of a middle school teacher, a high school teacher, a public school administrator, a professor from an academic discipline, a secondary education professor, and a preservice teacher at the level of student teaching were assigned the task of developing content for each of the phases. Curriculum development teams were also formed to fully develop Phase III of the program. Phase I, Self-Directed Experiences with Adolescents, was developed as an exploring practitioner phase; Phase II, Understanding Teaching and Schools in Modern Society, was developed as an inquiring practitioner phase; Phase III, Developing Skills to Meet the Needs of Society and Students, was developed as a problem-solving practitioner phase; and Phase IV, Developing and Demonstrating Skills to Organize Content and Technology for use in Classrooms, was developed as a decision-making practitioner phase. These phases were supported by four underlying themes: (1) teacher as reflective practitioner, (2) technology, (3) content specialties, and (4) assessment through a professional portfolio.

An oversight committee composed of representation from the planning committee and the phase development teams was responsible for translating the content areas into courses compatible with the university structure. The secondary education faculty was responsible for securing approval of the redesigned program at the various levels of the university and of the state agencies. Other than invited consultants in special areas such as technology, bilingual education, multicultural education, special education, and foundation areas, all members of the committees were drawn from the membership of the Collaborative (see Organizational Chart, figure 1).

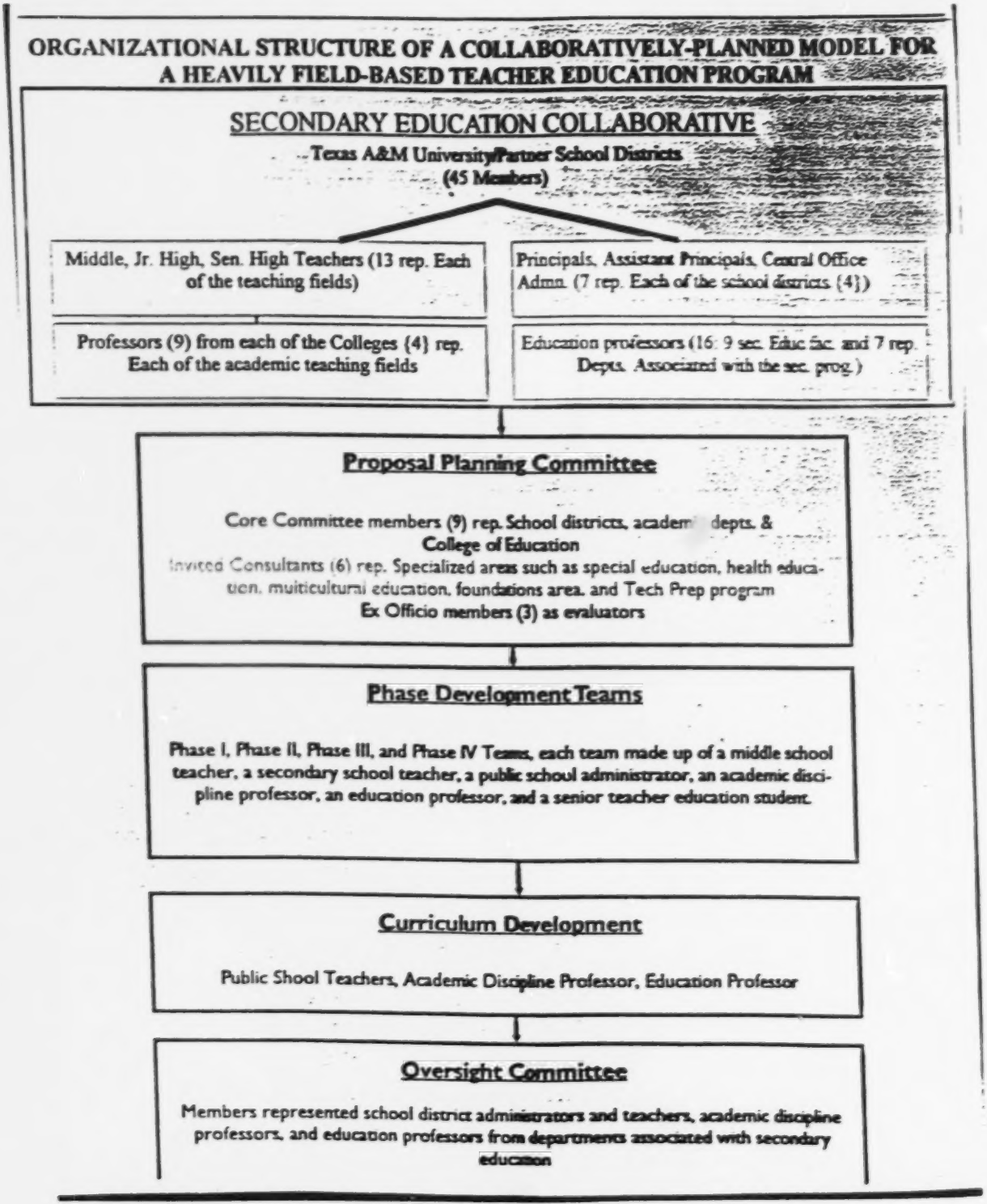
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF A COLLABORATIVELY-PLANNED MODEL FOR A HEAVILY FIELD-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
SECONDARY EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE
Texas A&M University/Partner School Districts
(45 Members)
Middle, Jr. High, Sen. High Teachers (13 rep. Each of the teaching fields)
Principals, Assistant Principals, Central Office Admn. (7 rep. Each of the school districts (4))
Professors (9) from each of the Colleges (4) rep. Each of the academic teaching fields
Education professors (16: 9 sec. Educ fac. and 7 rep. Depts. Associated with the sec. prog.)
Proposal Planning Committee
Core Committee members (9) rep. School districts, academ depts. & College of Education
Invited Consultants (6) rep. Specialized areas such as special education, health education, multicultural education, foundations area, and Tech Prep program
Ex Officio members (3) as evaluators
Phase Development Teams
Phase I, Phase II, Phase III, and Phase IV Teams, each team made up of a middle school teacher, a secondary school teacher, a public school administrator, an academic discipline professor, an education professor, and a senior teacher education student.
Curriculum Development
Public Shool Teachers, Academic Discipline Professor, Education Professor
Oversight Committee
Members represented school district administrators and teachers, academic discipline professors, and education professors from departments associated with secondary education

Figure 1

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Curriculum Development

For Phase III, members of the Collaborative identified six areas practicing teachers felt were most problematic for beginning practitioners: Effective Learning Environments, Motivation, Ethics of Teaching, Teaching Students How to Learn, Instructional Strategies, and Student Assessment and Evaluation. With a grant from the Institute for Educational Inquiry, National Network for Educational Renewal, the Collaborative formed Phase III Design Teams composed of secondary school teachers and university instructors to design and plan modules for each of the six areas. A unique feature of this phase of the program is the theoretical framework chosen to guide the design of each of the modules. A problem-solving format was used in which three types of knowledge were integrated: prior knowledge (the preservice teachers' preconceptions about teaching and learning), theoretical knowledge (the knowledge base about teaching and learning), and relevant knowledge (the knowledge of teachers that is generated for answers to classroom situations, see, for example, Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Three module topics were assigned to each of two courses. The courses are team-taught on school site by university and public school teachers. Each student is also assigned a mentor in the school whose classroom provides a platform for situated cognition (see, for example, Putnam and Borko, 2000). This model builds the students' capacity for problem-solving and a readiness for decision-making in Phase IV.

Program Evaluation

Pilot studies were designed and conducted throughout the developmental stages of the program. These studies were part of a number of benchmarks used to measure progress toward establishing a restructured secondary education program. Ongoing evaluation has taken place since the implementation of the program in 1997 and affirms the conceptual framework of the program, its content, the effectiveness of its coursework, and the benefits of collaboration (Peters & Gibson, 1999; Stuessy, 1999; Peters, Stuessy, & Loving, 2000).

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Accomplishments of the Partnership:

The outcome and primary accomplishment of the efforts of the Partnership is a model secondary teacher education program that involves students in a four year experience that results in becoming "reflective practitioners" of teaching (Schon, 1983). The collaborative nature of the program produces teachers who are prepared to make decisions about classroom instruction based on research and best practice (Peters, 2000). The partnership has worked to continually refine and improve a first-rate program for secondary teacher certification. The program was recognized in 1999 by the National Network for Educational Renewal as a nationally promising approach to secondary education, received an award from the Association of Teacher Educators as a finalist for the 2001 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education, and was ranked among the top 25 secondary education programs in the *U. S. News and World Report 2001 Rankings*.

Conclusions

School/University collaboration provides a structure in which a commitment is made from the view that teacher education ownership resides exclusively in neither a school district nor in a university but is a collaborative process whose only goal is to provide the best teachers for our youth. The outcomes of the assessment of this collaborative model, however, suggest that collaboratively designed teacher education programs make a difference only when those involved in the collaboration not only assist in the design but in the implementation of the program. This Research I university's program involves public school/university personnel in the delivery of each of its phases, from serving on portfolio review panels to co-teaching courses. Working together to implement the program uses the strengths of both school and university faculty. It leads to a recognition of the positive commonalities among the different cultures that far outweigh their differences. The beneficiaries are all those involved in the process but most particularly the youth of our country who will determine the future of our democracy.

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